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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A device for guiding an implant to a location adjacent a bone anchor, comprising:

a guide member including a connecting portion and a guiding portion, said connecting portion including:

a body extending between a distal end and a proximal end;

a connector extending distally from said distal end of said body, said connector including resiliently movable engagement portions extending outwardly therefrom in opposite directions from one another for releasably engaging said engagement portions within the bone anchor;

said guiding portion extends proximally from said proximal end of said body; and said body is tapered from said distal end to said proximal end with said distal end sized to transition from the connector to the bone anchor for guiding the implant to the anchor, wherein with said connecting portion adjacent the bone anchor said guiding portion extends proximally from said connecting portion and is adapted to receive the implant, wherein said guiding portion is flexible and positionable between an untaut configuration and a taut configuration as the implant is guided therealong.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said guiding portion is selected from the group consisting of: a cable, a wire, a tether, a cord, a suture, and a thread.

Claims 3-5 (Cancelled)

6. (Currently amended) The device of claim 1, wherein said connector connecting portion includes a body and a pair of extensions extending distally from said body, said distal extensions releasably engageable with the bone anchor.

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7. (Currently amended) The device of claim 6, wherein said distal extensions each include a corresponding one of said engagement portions extending therefrom, an engagement portion extending therefrom engageable with the bone anchor.

8. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein said engagement portions each project laterally from said respective distal extension.

9. (Currently amended) The device of claim 7, wherein said distal extensions are deflectable toward one another for insertion into the bone anchor and biased toward a pre-insertion orientation to facilitate said engagement portions engaging the bone anchor and said engagement portions each include a proximal end having a first height projecting from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions taper distally from said proximal end thereof to a distal end thereof having a second height less than said first height.

10. (Currently amended) A device for guiding an implant to a location adjacent a bone anchor, comprising:

a guide member including a connecting portion and a guiding portion, wherein with said connecting portion adjacent the bone anchor said guiding portion extends proximally from said connecting portion and is adapted to receive the implant, said connecting portion including a body comprising a tapered portion to forming a substantially uniform transition between the anchor and said guiding portion, wherein said guiding portion is structured to move between a loose condition for receiving the implant and a taut condition while the implant is guided along said guiding portion to the bone anchor.

11. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said guiding portion is flexible and movable to any one of a plurality of orientations relative to the anchor as the implant is guided therealong.

12. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said guiding portion is selected from the group consisting of: a cable, a wire, a tether, a cord, a suture, and a thread.

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13. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said connecting portion includes a connector extending distally from said body adapted to threadingly engage the bone anchor.

14. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said connecting portion includes a connector extending distally from said body adapted to frictionally engage the bone anchor.

15. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said connecting portion includes a body and a pair of extensions extending distally from said body, said distal extensions releasably engageable with the bone anchor.

16. (Currently amended) The device of claim 15, wherein said distal extensions each include an engagement portion extending therefrom in opposite directions from one another that are engageable with the bone anchor.

17. (Currently amended) The device of claim 16, wherein said engagement portions each project laterally from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions each include a proximal end having a first height projecting from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions taper distally from said proximal end thereof to a distal end thereof having a second height less than said first height.

18. (Original) The device of claim 16, wherein said distal extensions are deflectable toward one another for insertion into the bone anchor and biased toward a pre-insertion orientation to facilitate said engagement portions engaging the bone anchor.

19. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said body includes a cylindrical distal portion and said tapered portion extends between said distal portion and said guiding portion.

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20. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said tapered portion extends from a distal end of said body to a proximal end of said body.

21-67. (Cancelled)

68. (Currently amended) A device for guiding an implant to a location adjacent a bone anchor, comprising:

a guide member including a connecting portion and a guiding portion, wherein with said connecting portion adjacent the bone anchor said guiding portion extends proximally from said connecting portion and is adapted to receive the implant, wherein said guiding portion is flexible and movable to any one of a plurality of orientations relative to the anchor as the implant is guided therealong and said connecting portion includes a body and a pair of extensions extending distally from said body, said distal extensions are resiliently movable relative to said body and each includes an engagement portion extending therefrom releasably engageable within with the bone anchor, wherein said engagement portions extend outwardly from said distal extensions in opposite directions from one another.

69. (Previously presented) The device of claim 68, wherein said guiding portion is selected from the group consisting of: a cable, a wire, a tether, a cord, a suture, and a thread.

70. (Previously presented) The device of claim 68, wherein said connecting portion includes a rigid tapered proximal portion forming a continuation of said guiding portion adjacent the bone anchor.

71. (Currently amended) The device of claim 68, wherein said engagement portions each project laterally from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions each include a proximal end having a first height projecting from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions taper distally from said proximal end thereof to a distal end thereof having a second height less than said first height.

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72. (Previously presented) The device of claim 71, wherein said distal extensions are deflectable toward one another for insertion into the bone anchor and biased toward a pre-insertion orientation to facilitate said engagement portions engaging the bone anchor.

73. (Previously presented) The device of claim 68, wherein said guiding portion is structured to move between a loose condition and a taut condition.

74. (Currently amended) A device for guiding an implant to a location adjacent a bone anchor, comprising:

a guide member including a connecting portion and a guiding portion, wherein with said connecting portion adjacent the bone anchor said guiding portion extends proximally from said connecting portion and is adapted to receive the implant, wherein said connecting portion includes a body comprising a tapered portion forming a substantially uniform transition between the anchor and said guiding portion and said connecting portion includes a body and a pair of extensions extending distally from said body, said distal extensions are resiliently movable relative to said body and each includes an engagement portion extending therefrom releasably engageable within with the bone anchor, wherein said engagement portions extend outwardly from said distal extensions in opposite directions from one another.

75. (Previously presented) The device of claim 74, wherein said guiding portion is flexible and movable to any one of a plurality of orientations relative to the anchor as the implant is guided therealong.

76. (Previously presented) The device of claim 74, wherein said guiding portion is selected from the group consisting of: a cable, a wire, a tether, a cord, a suture, and a thread.

77. (Currently amended) The device of claim 74, wherein said engagement portions each project laterally from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions each include

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a proximal end having a first height projecting from said respective distal extension and said engagement portions taper distally from said proximal end thereof to a distal end thereof having a second height less than said first height.

78. (Previously presented) The device of claim 77, wherein said distal extensions are deflectable toward one another for insertion into the bone anchor and biased toward a pre-insertion orientation to facilitate said engagement portions engaging the bone anchor.

79. (Previously presented) The device of claim 74, wherein said guiding portion is structured for positioning between an untaut configuration and a taut configuration.

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